CHRISTIAN SCIENCE SO-CALLED

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AN EXPOSITION AND AN ESTIMATE

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PREFACE

"Christian Science" is much more than a peculiar type of medical theory and practice. It presents itself in the character of a distinct religion no less than does Mormonism, which it strongly resembles both in the scope of the prophetical function assigned to the founder and in the employment of a concentrated money power in the interest of propagandism. It is in this character of a distinct religion that Christian Science is examined and judged in the present essay, though, of course, its boasted healing art is so much of a factor in the religion that it must be accorded some attention.

We offer no apology for borrowing certain statements of fact from the book of Georgine Milmine on the Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy. Whatever may have been the comments of Chris-

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tian Science apologists, this volume is replete with documentary evidence, and shows throughout marks of the most painstaking investigation. It should be noticed, however, that the substantial proof of our main propositions is strictly dependent upon nothing outside of the statements of Mrs. Eddy herself, as contained in her books or in documents respecting whose authenticity there can be no reasonable doubt.

It is not expected that this essay will serve in any way as a message to the adherents of the Christian Science cult. By the decree of the founder a boycott is to be maintained against adverse literature. Unless, then, Christian Scientists are to trespass against recognized authority they must forbear genuine investigation, and content themselves with such portions of mythology as are passed out through the approved channels. We

have abundance of good will toward them, as being very largely amiable and well-meaning people; but we fail to discover how we can serve them in the discharge of our obligation to truth-telling. Evidence amounting even to demonstration can make no appeal to ears that are pledged not to hear. If, however, any disciple of Mrs. Eddy should hazard a glance into the following pages, let him notice that the author has no appetite whatever for denunciation, and that any element of severity to which he has given expression lies solely in the facts recorded and in inferences from the facts so obvious as scarcely to need formal statement.

Boston University, May, 1913.

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We intend to be as sparing of biographical details as our subject will permit. It will be appropriate, however, to notice by way of introduction the following facts: That Mary A. Morse Baker, who later took the name of Glover from her first husband and of Eddy from her third husband, and so came to style herself Mary Baker G. Eddy (her divorced husband, Patterson, having been excluded), was born at Bow, New Hampshire, July 16, 1821; came in 1835 to reside at the place now called Tilton; had no further educational advantages than an imperfect course in the district school; suffered much in childhood, as also in later years, from an abnormal condition of the nerves; attracted some at-

tention in early womanhood by reason of susceptibility to mesmeric influence and ability to function as a spiritualistic medium; was very much of the time in an unhappy state by reason of ill health, until in 1862 she received treatment from P. P. Quimby, of Portland, Maine; from that time, though by no means a specimen of normal health, was very much quickened in courage and ambition; near the end of the sixties began to shape the ideas which were embodied in her ultimate system; commenced soon to teach these ideas in a small way; in 1870 gathered at Lynn her first class of pupils; and in 1875 issued the first edition of "Science and Health," the volume which was to serve as the authoritative text-book of her peculiar combination of the healing art with religion.

Cutting short the biographical outline at this point, we turn at once to

our proper theme. This consists of the following three topics: (1) The claims of Mary Baker G. Eddy for herself and her system; (2) facts with a moral import which bear upon the merits of the claims; (3) the claims as they appear from a rational point of view.

I. Claims of the System

The claims of the founder of so-called "Christian Science" are of the most extraordinary scope. In the first place, though pretending to set forth a fundamental philosophy respecting God and man, she denies that she was under the slightest obligation to the thinkers of the past, aside from Christ and the biblical writers. "I have found nothing," she says, "in ancient or modern systems on which to found my own, except the teachings and demonstrations of our great Master, and the lives of prophets and apos-

tles."[1] In admitting that Christ and the apostles and prophets served as antecedents, Mrs. Eddy makes a qualification on the absolute originality of her scheme; but two considerations greatly reduce the significance of the qualification. On the one hand, she turns the sayings of Christ and of the biblical writers into her special property by claiming a sole prerogative of authentic interpretation. "It must not be forgotten," she says, "that in times past arrogant ignorance and pride, in attempting to steady the ark of truth, have dimmed the power and glory of the Scriptures, of which the Christian Science text-book is the key."[2] Again she remarks, "I read the inspired page through a higher than mortal sense."[3] On the other hand, she implies that Christ was not a complete antecedent, and that she

[1] Science and Health, p. 126. Unless otherwise indicated, we cite from the edition of 1902.

[2] Miscellaneous Writings, p. 92. [3] Ibid., p. 58.

has improved in important respects on his teaching and practice. "Our Master," she writes, "healed the sick and taught the generalities of its divine Principle; but he left no definite rule for demonstrating his Principle of healing and preventing disease. This remained to be discovered through Christian Science."[1] Furthermore, she says: "Even the Scriptures gave no direct basis for demonstrating the spiritual principle of healing until our heavenly Father saw fit through the Key to the Scriptures in Science and Health to unlock the mystery of Godliness."[2] It appears, accordingly, that the place which Mrs. Eddy asserts for herself in the process of divine revelation is not in any emphatic sense secondary. While Christ and the Scriptures preceded her, she interprets the latter with unrivaled authority and

[1] Science and Health, 1898, p. 41.

[2] Retrospection and Introspection, pp. 55, 56.

improves upon the teaching and example of the former.

So exceptional an order of achievement implies, of course, a special divine call and replenishment. In fact, Mrs. Eddy sounds no uncertain note either as respects the divine summons to her mission or her plenary inspiration for its accomplishment. "God called her," she says, "to proclaim his gospel to this age."[1] More specifically she writes: "In the year 1866 I discovered the Christ Science, or divine laws of Life, and named it Christian Science. God had been graciously fitting me, during many years, for the reception of a final revelation of the absolute Principle of scientific being and healing."[2] "In following these leadings of scientific revelation the Bible was my only text-book. The Scriptures were illumined, reason and revelation were reconciled; and afterward the truth of

[1] Science and Health, Preface, p. xi. [2] Ibid., p. 107.

Christian Science was demonstrated. No human pen or tongue taught me the science contained in this book, Science and Health; and neither tongue nor pen can overthrow it."[1] This implies clearly enough a claim to inerrant inspiration, at least as respects subject-matter; and the like claim crops out in other declarations. It is contained implicitly in the assertion that a "thorough perusal of the author's publications heals sickness";[2] for, surely, if any taint of errant mortal mind were upon these writings they could not be thought to have such wonderful virtue. An implicit claim to infallibility appears, furthermore, in Mrs. Eddy's declared intolerance for any variety of teaching within the domain of mental healing. "In reality," she says, "there is but one school of the science of mind-healing. Any departure from Science

[1] Science and Health, p. 110. [2] Ibid., p. 446.

is an irreparable loss of Science. What is said or written correctly on this Science originates from the Principle and practice laid down in Science and Health."[1]

One of the most startling of the assumptions of Mrs. Eddy lies in the relation which she predicates between Christian Science and the Holy Ghost. The plain import of her statements is that she meant it to be understood that the Holy Ghost is to be identified with her system of teaching. In Science and Health she notes that she uses the terms "Divine Science" and "Christian Science" interchangeably.[2] But in the seventeenth chapter of the same volume she defines the Holy Ghost as "Divine Science, the developments of eternal Life, Truth, and Love";[3] and in the preceding chapter she writes: "John the Baptist prophe-

[1] Rudimental Divine Science, tenth edition, 1897, pp. 29, 30.
[2] Science and Health, p. 127. [3] Ibid., p. 588.

sied the coming of the immaculate Jesus, and John saw in those days the spiritual idea as the Messiah who would baptize with the Holy Ghost—divine Science."[1] Again, she says: "The ego is revealed in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; but the full truth is found only in Divine Science, where we see God as Life, Truth, and Love. . . . The Science of God and Man is the Holy Ghost."[2] From this standpoint Mrs. Eddy construes the sin against the Holy Ghost. "There may be those," she remarks, "who, having learned the power of unspoken thought, use it rather to harm than to heal, and who are using that power against Christian Scientists. This giant sin is the sin against the Holy Ghost spoken of in Matt. xii. 31, 32."[3] As supplementing this statement the following may fitly be added: "A sneer at meta-

[1] Science and Health, p. 562,
[2] Unity of Good, pp. 64, 65.
[3] Miscellaneous Writings, 1897, p. 55.

physics is a scoff at Deity, at his goodness, mercy, and might. Christian Science is the unfolding of true metaphysics."[1] It would seem thus to be a very serious matter to speak disrespectfully of Christian Science. Still, the gainsayer may persist in breathing somewhat freely in view of Mrs. Eddy's categorical declaration, "Man is incapable of sin."[2] The inference necessarily follows that the liability to commit a real sin against the Holy Ghost reduces to quite harmless proportions.

In further illustration of Mrs. Eddy's claims, various sentences in which rhetoric is put under severe strain to express the glory and worth of Christian Science may fitly be cited. The following are specimens: "No person can take the individual place of the Virgin Mary. No person can compass or fulfill the individual

[1] Miscellaneous Writings, p. 69. [2] Science and Health, p. 475.

mission of Jesus of Nazareth. No person can take the place of the author of Science and Health, the discoverer and founder of Christian Science. Each individual must fill his own niche in time and eternity. The second appearing of Jesus is unquestionably the spiritual advent of the advancing idea of God as in Christian Science."[1] "Between Christian Science and all forms of superstition a great gulf is fixed, as impassable as that between Dives and Lazarus. . . . Science is immortal and coördinate neither with the premises nor with the conclusions of mortal beliefs."[2] "Christian Science translates Mind, God, to mortals. It is the infinite calculus defining the line, plane, space, and fourth dimension of Spirit."[3] "The teacher of Christian Science needs continually to study this text-book

[1] Retrospection and Introspection, 1900, pp. 95, 96.
[2] Science and Health, 1892, pp. 83, 84.
[3] Miscellaneous Writings, p. 22.

[Science and Health]. His work is to replenish thought and to spiritualize human life from this open fountain of truth and love."[1] "Divine Science is not an interpolation of the Scriptures, but is redolent of love, health, and holiness for the whole human race. It only needs the prism of this Science to divide the rays of Truth, and to bring out the entire hues of Deity, which scholastic theology has hidden. . . . This Science is ameliorative and regenerative, delivering mankind from all error through the light and love of truth."[2] "Understanding is a quality of God, a quality which separates Christian Science from supposition and makes Truth final."[3] "This sacred city, described in the Apocalypse (xxi. 16) as one that 'lieth foursquare' and cometh 'down from God, out of heaven,' represents the light and glory

[1] Miscellaneous Writings, p. 92.
[2] Ibid., pp. 194, 235.
[3] Science and Health, p. 506.

of divine Science. . . . The four sides of our city are the Word, Christ, Christianity, and divine Science."[1]

The breadth of Mrs. Eddy's claims may furthermore be seen in the radical disparagement in which she indulges against everything outside of Christian Science or coming in anywise into competition therewith. She affirms in so many words, "Outside of this Science all is unstable error."[2] This broad maxim she carries out in various directions. Applying it to the customary medical theory and practice, she brands them as virtually forms of assault against reason, revelation, and God. "Because God is supreme and omnipotent," she asserts, "*materia medica*, hygiene, and animal magnetism are impotent; and their only supposed efficacy is in apparently deluding reason, denying revelation, and

[1] Science and Health, p. 575.
[2] Ibid., p. 202.

dethroning Deity."[1] She does not hesitate to put the bodily senses out of commission, and to set up the mandates of Christian Science in their place. "The testimony of the corporeal senses," she writes, "cannot inform us what is real and what is delusive. But the revelations of Christian Science unlock the treasures of truth."[2] "To the five corporeal senses man appears to be matter and mind united; but Christian Science reveals him as the idea of God, and declares the corporeal senses to be mortal and erring illusions."[3] How absolutely incompetent the senses are deemed to offer valid testimony appears in the broad statement: "Human procreation, birth, life, and death are subjective states of the human erring mind."[4]

With the senses rated as incompetent to offer any testimony, physical

[1] Miscellaneous Writings, p. 3. [2] Science and Health, p. 70.
[3] Ibid., p. 477. [4] Miscellaneous Writings, p. 286.

sciences, of whatever description, would seem to be sent to the dump-heap of discredited falsities. And various statements of Mrs. Eddy, whether held to with entire consistency or not, imply quite unequivocally that such is the proper disposition of them. "The so-called laws of matter," she says, "are nothing but false beliefs in the presence of intelligence and life where mind is not."[1] "Minerals and vegetables are found, according to divine Science, to be the creations of erroneous thought, not of matter."[2] "Vertebrata, articulata, mollusca, and radiata are evolved by mortal and material thought. By this thought they are classified and supposed to possess life and mind. These beliefs will disappear when the radiation of Spirit destroys forever any belief in intelligent matter"[3]—that is, as Mrs.

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[1] Science and Health, p. 171.
[2] Ibid., p. 543. [3] Ibid., p. 556.

Eddy must be understood to mean, bars out all faith in any real association between mind and matter, soul and body. The plain conclusion is that Christian Science properly negates the whole circle of the sciences as commonly understood. If Mrs. Eddy's claims are valid, the world is clearly obligated to seek light from her candle, and from no other source.

II. The Application of Moral Tests to the Claims

Taking up our second topic, we have now to consider certain facts which, by reason of their moral import, bear upon the merits of Mrs. Eddy's extraordinary claims. We touch here upon a theme which we should greatly prefer to pass by, were it possible to do so with logical consistency. But that is out of the question. Pretensions to a divine mission of such transcendent import as Mrs.

Eddy claimed for herself cannot be regarded as indifferently related to character and conduct. There is the less occasion to shut out these matters, since evidence respecting them lies in the open, and there is no need to make inquisition into the more private record of this exacting claimant to the faith and obeisance of Christendom.

In the first place, we notice the very remarkable piece of apparent mendacity in Mrs. Eddy's emphatic repudiation of obligation to P. P. Quimby, of Portland, Maine, who was an enthusiast for mental healing, and who wrote extensively in behalf of what he considered his great discovery, leaving his writings, however, in manuscript form. It is in evidence that Mrs. Eddy was in Portland in 1862 for about three weeks, and again in 1864 for two or three months, and shared with others the opportunity to copy

parts of Quimby's writings which the generous-hearted healer freely accorded to his patients.[1] Did she use such opportunity and gain any materials to build her own system upon? It suited her thirst for exclusive distinction in her later years to deny that she did. In her book entitled Retrospection and Introspection she calls Quimby a magnetic doctor and asserts that he was in no wise connected with her discovery of the principle of Christian Science.[2] In her volume of Miscellaneous Writings she styles Quimby a magnetic practitioner, represents him as depending upon manipulation in his cures, and invites the reader to believe that her examination of his writings was confined to a casual glance at a slip on which he had penned down some quite indifferent notes on her own case.[3] In the Christian Science

[1] Georgine Milmine, The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy and the History of Christian Science, pp. 56–70.

[2] Ibid., p. 38. [3] Ibid., pp. 378, 379.

Journal for June, 1887, she asserted respecting Quimby: "I never heard him intimate that he healed disease mentally. . . . His healing was never considered or called anything but mesmerism."

Now, the utter falsity of these statements is matter of complete demonstration, and that in more than one line. The proof is contained, in the first place, in Quimby's manuscripts, as Georgine Milmine, who had free access to them, testifies and illustrates at length.[1] They show that Quimby was emphatically an advocate of mental instrumentality in healing; that such manipulation as he used was a comparatively indifferent adjunct, a quite dispensable thing, since he believed in the efficacy of absent treatment; that he taught that disease has its source in erroneous belief, and that, consequently, the remedy lies in in-

[1] The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy, pp. 46–55, 129, 130.

stilling the truth; that he believed that Christ had preceded him in the science of healing; that he distinguished between the embodied Jesus and the principle Christ; that he also distinguished in man between a kind of transcendental personality, "the scientific man," as he called him, and the inferior man who is in bondage to sense and error; that, in short, he anticipated cardinal features of Mrs. Eddy's system, so that she needed to do little else than to intensify certain elements of a pseudo-metaphysics on the allness of God and the nothingness of matter.

In the second place, a scrapbook, prepared by the wife of Quimby, and containing newspaper comments, as also a circular descriptive of the method of cure practiced by her husband—both the comments and the circular antedating Mrs. Eddy's first visit to Portland—clearly refutes her

later interpretation of the method of the Portland healer. Lyman P. Powell, who cites the circular and specimens of the newspaper comments, which he had abundant opportunity to examine through the courtesy of George A. Quimby, renders the judgment that the scrapbook "alone should suffice to close the case."[1]

In the third place, very cogent proof that Mrs. Eddy's statements about the theory and practice of Quimby were false is contained in the testimony of personal disciples of the Portland mental healer, like Julius A. Dresser and W. F. Evans, the former having given substantial evidence in his book on The True History of Mental Science, edited by his son, H. W. Dresser,[2] and the latter having

[1] Christian Science, The Faith and Its Founder, pp. 38–43, 228–230.

[2] J. A. Dresser, who visited Quimby in 1860, gives explicit citations from his statements. H. W. Dresser testifies that the Quimby manuscripts, containing over eight hundred closely written pages, already in existence six months before Mrs. Eddy's first visit to Portland, were read by him and found to "contain a very original and complete statement of the data and theory of mental healing."

carried out the principles of the healing art of his master in writings of his own.[1]

Finally, conclusive proof of the falsity of Mrs. Eddy's later version of Quimby's healing art and of her relalations to him is contained in her earlier version of the same matters. In 1862, in a contribution to the Portland Evening Courier, expressing the gratitude she felt for benefits received, she eulogized Quimby in a very fervent strain, repudiated the notion that he healed by animal magnetism, and asserted that it was rather by the truth which he established in the patient. "This truth," she wrote, "which he opposes to the error of giving intelligence to matter and placing pain where it never placed itself,

[1] Evans, in his book on Mental Medicine, published in 1872, three years before Science and Health was issued, made this statement: "Disease being in its root a wrong belief, change that belief and we cure the disease. The late Dr. Quimby, of Portland, one of the most successful healers of this or any age, embraced this view of the nature of disease" (p. 210, cited by J. Whitehead, The Illusions of Christian Science, pp. 5, 6; also by W. J. Leonard, The Pioneer Apostle of Mental Science).

if received understandingly, changes the currents of the system to their normal action; and the mechanism of the body goes on undisturbed."[1] In a second contribution she likened the method of Quimby to that of Christ, and declared of him, "he rolls away the stone from the sepulcher of error and health is the resurrection." Her first attempts at teaching were based upon a manuscript which she acknowledged to have been derived from Quimby, an extant copy of which corresponds precisely to twenty closely written pages of one of the Quimby productions—a production certified to have been in existence before Mrs. Eddy ever saw the Portland healer.[2] As late as 1871, in a letter to W. W. Wright, of Lynn, in answer to the question, "Has this theory ever been

[1] J. A. Dresser, The True History of Mental Science, revised edition, 1899, pp. 31, 32.

[2] Milmine, pp. 125–132; F. W. Peabody, The Religio-medical Masquerade, pp. 83–87. Peabody's book may be a very intense polemic, but no one can deny that he had first-class opportunities to get hold of facts.

advertised and practiced before you introduced it, or by any other individual?" Mrs. Eddy wrote: "Never advertised, and practiced by only one individual who healed me, Dr. Quimby, of Portland, Maine, an old gentleman who had made it a research for twenty-five years, starting from the standpoint of magnetism, thence going forward and leaving that behind."[1] So the earlier Mrs. Eddy gives the lie to the later. How did she explain the flagrant contradiction? She could only take refuge in the transparent subterfuge that if she wrote in her earlier days what was asserted to be in the record, it must have been as the result of the overwhelming mesmeric influence of Quimby. "Did I write," she asks, "those articles in Mr. Dresser's pamphlet purporting to be mine? I might have written them twenty or thirty years ago, for I was under the

[1] Milmine, p. 101.

mesmeric treatment of Dr. Quimby from 1862 until his death in 1865. He was illiterate and I knew nothing of the science of mind-healing. . . . Mind-science was unknown to me; and my head was so turned by animal magnetism and will-power, under his treatment, that I might have written something as hopelessly incorrect as the articles now published in the Dresser pamphlet."[1] This reference to the mesmeric influence of Quimby, fantastic enough in itself, is thoroughly discredited, on the one hand, by the content of the letter to W. W. Wright, written several years after the death of Quimby, when his mesmeric influence might be supposed to be substantially extinct, and, on the other hand, by the desperate feat to which resort was made in order to gain countenance for the fable that, as between Quimby and

[1] Christian Science Journal, June, 1887, pp. 109, 110. Compare the testimony of Mrs. Eddy's literary adviser, Rev. James Henry Wiggin, cited by Milmine, pp. 102, 103.

the author of Science and Health, the debt was on the side of the former.

Here we touch upon the darkest phase of the entire historic episode. In June of 1883 Mrs. Eddy sent an attorney to Sarah G. Crosby, of Waterville, Maine, an acquaintance of hers who had been a patient of Quimby. By the hand of her attorney she conveyed to Mrs. Crosby a letter in which she sought to induce her to sign an affidavit to what a sane historical judgment cannot regard as anything else than a downright falsehood. "Now, my dear one," she wrote, "I want you to tell this man, the bearer of this note, that you know that Dr. Quimby and I were friends, and that I used to take his scribblings and fix them over for him and give him my thoughts and language, which, as I understand it, were far in advance of his. Will you do this and give an affidavit to this effect and greatly

oblige your affectionate sister Mary?"[1] As Mrs. Crosby preferred not to swear to what she knew to be absolutely false, the solicited affidavit was not forthcoming. What Mrs. Eddy got for her pains was simply the creation of documentary means of exposing her attempt to gain manufactured evidence and a record of her conviction that matter in the Quimby manuscripts was quite analogous to that of her own compositions.

From the letter to Mrs. Crosby it appears that in 1883 Mrs. Eddy was ready to claim that during the period of her acquaintance with Quimby she was able to revise his manuscripts in the direction of an improved exposition of the subject of mental healing. From the statement of the same Mrs. Eddy, in the Christian Science Journal, as quoted above, it appears that in 1887 she was ready to aver that

[1] Included in the affidavit of Mrs. Crosby, as cited by Milmine, pp. 99–101.

during the specified period she "knew nothing of the science of mind-healing," and was too thoroughly swayed by mesmeric influence to have proper control of thought and expression. What less than the desperate straits of its perpetrator does such self-contradiction illustrate?

Were it possible to explain the apparent mendacity of Mrs. Eddy by the supposition that she arrived at such a peculiar mental state that she unconsciously reversed the records of the past, we would charitably admit the explanation. But the supposition is not credible. The interval between the primary version of her relations with Quimby and the later version was not long enough naturally to work a thorough metamorphosis of her recollections of important turning-points in her life. Then, too, the expedients to which she resorted, and especially her subtle approach to Mrs. Crosby, do

not reveal a woman who had simply gotten into cloudland and could not see aright things that had happened on the earth; they show, rather, a woman who was wide awake and keenly cognizant of mundane connections. Furthermore, the specific interest which urged Mrs. Eddy to put forth the revised version of her obligations to Quimby is clearly manifest even to common eyesight. It consisted in her intemperate thirst for sole distinction in the province of mental healing.

The same motive wrought with amazing vigor in other connections than the one reviewed. It prompted her in case any of those who had been associated with her or figured in her retinue showed any signs of independent motion, to visit them with her sore displeasure, not to say her venomous hostility. This was strikingly illustrated in her relations with Richard

Kennedy, her first pupil of any considerable prominence, and the one with whom she was most closely associated in Lynn from 1870 to 1872. At the latter date he saw fit to leave her and to start an independent practice, having become weary of her extravagant claims and domineering temper. For a satellite thus to leave its orbit was regarded by Mrs. Eddy as an unpardonable offense. She began to denounce him as a mesmerist and a traitor to science because he manipulated his patients' heads after the Quimby method—the very method which she had taught him and which she herself practiced for years.[1] Worse than this, she went on to picture the kind-hearted and popular young man as a villain of the deepest dye, who with the malignity of the witch used the resources of malicious animal magnetism to harry and to injure people.

[1] For adequate proofs see Milmine, pp. 143–145.

Her feeling against him reached the pitch of hysterical frenzy, as appears in the third edition of Science and Health, where a large section of the extended chapter on demonology is given to the excoriation of Kennedy. She styles him a moral leper, and charges against his demonic art a catalogue of ills which had befallen her. Breaking out into a dramatic strain, she prophesies his ruin in these lurid terms: "The Nero of to-day, regaling himself with the tortures of individuals, is repeating history, and will fall upon his own sword, and it shall pierce him through. Let him remember this when in the dark recesses of his thought he is robbing, committing adultery, or killing; when he is attempting to turn friend away from friend, ruthlessly stabbing the quivering heart."[1]

An illustration almost rivaling that

[1] Science and Health, third edition, revised, 1881, vol. ii, chap. vi.

of the Kennedy case, as to what a satellite must expect when deviating from the orbit of perfect subserviency, was furnished by Daniel H. Spofford. In a kind of supplement to the second edition of Science and Health she painted his character and his fate in these somber hues: "Behold! thou criminal mental marauder, that would blot out the sunshine of earth, that would sever friends, destroy virtue, put out Truth, and murder in secret the innocent, befouling thy track with the trophies of thy guilt,—I say, Behold the cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, already rising in the horizon of Truth, to pour down upon thy guilty head the hailstones of doom." This perfervid tirade was not the only chastisement which was visited upon Spofford. In 1878 an effort was made to bring him to trial for the crime of witchcraft. The charge, it is true, was filed in the name of Miss Lucretia

Brown, of Ipswich, but convincing evidence shows that Mrs. Eddy was back of this absurd attempt at prosecution."[1]

A third illustration of how Mrs. Eddy construed any sign of independent motion in a disciple was supplied by Edward J. Arens. As soon as he got aside from the line of loyal subserviency, Mrs. Eddy flew to her usual charge of a diabolical use of mental power, was sure that the sickness of her husband was due to his malign influence, and, on the death of Mr. Eddy, in 1882, gravely charged the object of her suspicion and hate with the crime of arsenical poisoning mentally administered.[2] Further, she attempted to prosecute Arens on this charge. As Russell H. Conwell, who was then practising law in Boston, testifies, she asked him to take the

[1] Milmine, pp. 234–241; F. W. Peabody, The Religio-Medical Masquerade, pp. 184, 185.

[2] Milmine, pp. 284–291.

case. "I refused," he says, "to be a party to any such nonsensical transactions, and tried to dissuade her, but in vain. She obtained the services of another lawyer and actually brought proceedings against the student. Of course, the judge threw the case out of court."[1]

The facts just stated show incidentally how the mind of Mrs. Eddy was obsessed by the witchcraft delusion, and bespeak for her a solitary distinction as the one person in recent times who has attempted to turn the delusion into a practical horror by making it a basis for judicial prosecution. But that is not the point which we are emphasizing. The fact which in the present connection is to be deduced from these cases is the intemperate thirst of Mrs. Eddy for solitary honor in the domain of mental healing, and the fierce intolerance which she ex-

[1] Christian Advocate, New York, December 8, 1910.

hibited toward any satellite that ever dared to show a sign of independent movement. They make manifest how she was penetrated through and through with the spirit of egoistic assumption and monopolistic sovereignty.

The three instances that have been recounted by no means complete the list of those which might be put in evidence on the point in hand. Very much in line with them as evidences of Mrs. Eddy's spirit is the case of Mrs. Josephine C. Woodbury. Doubtless, it is true that Mrs. Woodbury's high-wrought enthusiasm over the marvels of the Christian Science dispensation led her into a capital absurdity. Her aberration, however, involved no disproof of pure character. In truth, it consisted simply in an overzealous application of a fantastic notion derived from Mrs. Eddy herself. But this fact was made no

ground of forbearance. Mrs. Woodbury was summarily dismissed from membership in the Christian Science Church. Later, when she saw fit to give to the public her revised estimate of Christian Science of the Eddyite type (May, 1899), she was assailed with a description as outrageously slanderous as ever came from a pen dipped in gall and bitterness. In her annual message to the mother Church, in June, 1899, Mrs. Eddy made place for this envenomed effusion: "The doom of the Babylonish woman referred to in Revelation is being fulfilled. This woman, drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, drunk with the wine of her fornication, would enter even the church, and, retaining the heart of the harlot and the purpose of the destroying angel, poison such as drink of the living water. . . . That which the revelator saw in

spiritual vision will be accomplished. The Babylonish woman is fallen: and who shall mourn over the widowhood of lust, of her that hath become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit and the cage of every unclean bird?" That the "Babylonish woman" was meant to denote Mrs. Woodbury is unmistakable. The fact is placed entirely beyond the pale of reasonable doubt by the circumstances under which the message to the mother Church was written, by certain phrases in the message, and by its parallelism to other deliverances of Mrs. Eddy against specific individuals. Furthermore, it is not in the least degree likely that she would go out of her way to contradict her own postulates on the nonexistence of sin and the necessity of ignoring evil, except in response to a concrete occasion which, from her point of view, called for hot indignation. More specifically, if the

testimony of a Boston attorney can be trusted, legal evidence is furnished, in letters from Mrs. Eddy which came under his notice, that Mrs. Woodbury was the party commented upon in the message to the mother Church.[1] Like the apocalyptic effusions against Kennedy and Spofford, this outburst shows with what measureless outrage the founder of Christian Science could assail the character of those who crossed her path.

Mrs. Eddy's jealous and despotic temper was further illustrated in the case of Mrs. Augusta Stetson, of New York, who was made the victim, in 1909, of a sentence of suspension. In this transaction Mrs. Eddy kept in the background, but that the moving impulse came from her autocratic hand cannot fairly be questioned. The importance of the matter and the purely instrumental position assigned in the

[1] Peabody, p. 13.

constitution of the Christian Science Church to the officials under her together guarantee that without her command, implicit or explicit, the adverse sentence would never have been passed. The real ground of that sentence was simply the crime of being too prominent and influential. Mrs. Stetson was charged, it is true, with mental malpractice. But no unprejudiced observer supposes that the charge was anything more than a pretext for compassing the ends of Mrs. Eddy's jealousy. If it be granted that in any sense Mrs. Stetson was guilty of malpractice, it must be added that she was simply following out a method for which Mrs. Eddy herself had supplied a superabundance of precedents.[1]

An illustration of the spirit of exclusive despotic supremacy in the founder of Christian Science—an illus-

[1] See below, pp. 81-83.

tration in no wise second to that already given—may be found in the scheme for the government and administration of the Christian Science communion, as it has been shaped by Mrs. Eddy and placed on record in the Manual of the Mother Church. The way in which the existing organization was effected has the look of a very sinister piece of autocracy. The primitive organization in Boston was dissolved, and in explanation of the dissolution the following note appeared in the Christian Science Journal for February, 1890: "The dissolution of the visible organization of the Church is the sequence and complement of that of the College Corporation and Association. The College disappeared that the Spirit of Christ might have freer course among its students and all who come into the understanding of Divine Science; the bonds of the organization of the Church were thrown

away, so that the members might assemble themselves together and provoke one another to good works in the bond of Love." This editorial note, which undoubtedly was printed by the dictation or with the consent of Mrs. Eddy, was naturally taken by the members of the preëxisting society as a sign that a relative freedom from the bonds of strict organization, in the interest of a more untrammeled spiritual life, was in prospect. They were awakened shortly to the fact that the dissolution had been utilized for the installation of a new organization of the most ironclad character, in the shaping of which they had been granted as a body no part, and in the management of which they were to count as the veriest ciphers. They discovered that in place of the local society a mother Church central to the whole Christian Science communion had been instituted, and that over the mother

Church and communion a perfectly autocratic power had been vested in Mrs. Eddy.

The new plan of church government as expressed in the Manual of the Mother Church, and especially in the later editions, is such a specimen of centralized sovereignty and of ambitious self-deification as scarcely finds a parallel in history. By the provisions of the Manual all the officials, from the board of directors down to the readers, hold their positions by the approbation or consent of the pastor emeritus, Mrs. Eddy. She judges all, is judged by none. By the provisions of the Manual the reading of the text-book, Science and Health, must form, together with the reading of scriptural passages, a part of every public service in Christian Science churches, and the reading of the text-book must be prefaced by an announcement of the title of the book and of the name of the

author. Moreover, though the Scriptures are to be read first in order of time, the reader of the text-book is to outrank the reader of the Bible, the former being styled First Reader and the latter Second Reader. By the provisions of the Manual, for every member of the mother Church "the Bible and Science and Health (with other works of its author) must be the only text-books for self-instruction in Christian Science, and for teaching and practicing metaphysical healing."[1] By the provisions of the Manual no preaching is to be allowed in Christian Science churches. The obvious reason for this regulation was the felt necessity of shutting out everything which might in anywise come into competition with the teaching function of Mrs. Eddy. The regulation was expressed in these terms: "I, Mary Baker G.

[1] Of course by implication this rule would apply to all Christian Scientists and not merely to the numerous members, resident and nonresident, of the mother Church.

Eddy, ordain the Bible and Science and Health with the Key to the Scriptures Pastor over the Mother Church—the First Church of Christ Scientist in Boston, Massachusetts—which will continue to preach for the Church and the World. The subject of the Lesson-Sermon in the morning service of the mother Church, and of the branch churches of Christ Scientist, shall be repeated at their evening service on Sunday."[1] By the provisions of the Manual it is made the duty of the officers of the Church, the editors of periodicals, and the members of the publication committees promptly to comply with any written order of Mary Baker G. Eddy on pain of instant dismission. By the provisions of the Manual no member of the Church shall use written formulas, or permit his patients or pupils to use

[1] Art. xiii. As appears in the concluding part of the citation, and as Mrs. Eddy made it to be understood in other connections, the mandate excluding preaching applied to all Christian Science churches.

them, as auxiliaries to teaching Christian Science or for healing the sick. The books of the founder of Christian Science must be honored by being placed on exhibition in connection with the specified functions; such is the plain implication of the context. By the provisions of the Manual a boycott is to be observed against publishing houses and bookstores that place obnoxious books on sale, that is, of course, books adverse to Christian Science. By the provisions of the Manual a Board of Lectureship is established, which has the duty of securing that each licensed lecture shall include a true reply to criticisms against Christian Science and "bear testimony to the facts pertaining to the life of the Pastor Emeritus."

In short, the Manual could not have been phrased in appreciably different terms had it been devised on purpose to serve as the maximum specimen of

the most limiting and dwarfing despotism. It reduces the members of the mother Church and, by plain implication, the entire Christian Science constituency, to abject mental vassalage to Mary Baker G. Eddy. But the most astounding provision of the Manual remains yet to be mentioned. In Article XXII, Section 4, we read: "If the author of Science and Health bear witness to the offense of mental malpractice, it shall be considered a sufficient evidence thereof."[1] Now, mental malpractice, as being hidden in the recesses of the mind, is, of course, beyond possible observation except to an omniscient subject, unless the practitioner chooses to make a disclosure. Did Mrs. Eddy, in having this article inserted, intend to claim practical omniscience or power infallibly to detect mental secrets? If so, there is imperative need to challenge her san-

[1] Fifty-sixth edition, 1906.

ity. If she did not, then unmistakably she was guilty of a piece of despotic arbitrariness that amounts to a moral infamy. Did the directors of the mother Church believe Mrs. Eddy to be practically omniscient? If so, then they ought to declare their faith and accept such a judgment on their sanity as the declaration would merit. If they did not believe thus, they were guilty of most unworthy abasement in consenting to serve under a regulation so infamously despotic. Recall the fact that Mrs. Eddy in the most positive manner charged Arens with murdering her husband through mental malpractice, and accused others of similar enormities, and then in the light of these events weigh the acceptance of an obligation to take the testimony of the author of Science and Health as conclusive evidence. An item of legislation more monstrously unjust and despotic never saw the light.

Another deeply compromising phase in Mrs. Eddy's moral record consists in the extent to which it bears the stamp of remorseless greed. In the most glaring fashion she treated her assumed prophetical vocation as a money asset. The truths of the new dispensation which she heralded were handed out at a high figure. The charge for her teaching was on a progressive scale. At the start it was whatever she could get; then $100 in advance, with ten per cent royalty on the student's subsequent income from practice; then $300 for twelve lessons; and, finally, $300 for seven lessons. According to the rate last named, one hour's teaching of a class of fifty would bring to Mrs. Eddy over $2,000.

The price put upon her written revelation testified equally to her appreciation of the particular form of nothingness which is denominated

money, being in striking contrast with the ordinary plan of Bible circulation. From three to six dollars, according to binding, was continuously the charge for Science and Health, and security for a wide circle of purchasers was provided in the requisition that copies should be in the hands of all teachers and students. Nor was this the full extent of the virtual demand. Loyal Scientists were not expected to content themselves with copies of some one edition to the neglect of new matter in a later edition. Sometimes a special stimulus was given to their inclination to make a fresh purchase by formal emphasis on the value of the additional matter contained in the new issue. Thus in February, 1908, this notice was published over Mrs. Eddy's signature: "I request Christian Scientists universally to read the paragraph beginning at line thirty of page 442 in the edition of Science and

Health which will be issued February 29. I consider the information there given to be of great importance at this stage of the workings of animal magnetism, and it will greatly aid the students in their individual experiences." Now, what was the important information thus advertised? Simply two lines of perfectly pithless stuff reading as follows: "Christian Scientists, be a law to yourselves, that mental malpractice can harm you neither when asleep nor when awake."

Extraordinary expedients were also employed by Mrs. Eddy to create a market for other productions of her pen. In the Christian Science Journal for March, 1897, just after the publication of the volume entitled Miscellaneous Writings, the following mandate, signed by Mrs. Eddy, appeared: "Christian Scientists in the United States and Canada are hereby en-

joined not to teach a student of Christian Science for one year, commencing on March 14, 1897. Miscellaneous Writings is calculated to prepare the minds of all true thinkers to understand the Christian Science textbook more correctly than a student can. The Bible, Science and Health with the Key to the Scriptures, and my other published works, are the proper instructors for this hour. It shall be the duty of all Christian Scientists to circulate and to sell as many of these books as they can. If a member of the First Church of Christ Scientist shall fail to obey this injunction, it will render him liable to lose his membership in this Church." What a spectacle! An inspired prophetess, a second Messiah, closing the fountain of instruction contained in the voice of the teacher, thrusting her literary wares into the faces of all the faithful, and requiring

them to be active agents in the circulation of those wares under pain of excommunication!

Excuse for such mammonish expedients no sane understanding can discover. Mrs. Eddy's apologists, it is true, have offered the plea that, while she took in large sums of money, she also gave away large sums. But the plea, apart from the proper specifications, counts for next to nothing. These apologists have been challenged to specify the large sums and the objects for which they were given, and to the best of our information they have not found it convenient to reply. Some bestowments of relatively moderate amounts can very likely be named; but the available evidence points to the conclusion that it better suited the temper of Mrs. Eddy to devote her growing fortune to the perpetuation of a scheme of virtual self-deification than to cut it down by

generous benefactions to any outside interest.

Out of the orders of facts which have been noticed the proper inferences leap forth unsolicited. It is as plain as the day what disposition must be made of the high claims of the author of Science and Health. Not until men can gather grapes from thorns and figs from thistles will there be any excuse for imagining that an authoritative revelation could come through such a person as Mary Baker G. Eddy is proved to have been by indisputable documentary evidence. No doubt, as a woman of extraordinary nervous tension, she could be rather fascinating in her happier moods. But what could be more foolish and aberrant than to permit impressions derived from any superficial self-manifestation to weigh against the moral blemishes with which her career is broadly streaked? Insight into the nature of the actual

record must make it appear as one of the most amazing misadjustments in all religious history that this woman should be brought into temples of worship and placed there, as respects the authority of her teaching, on a level with Jesus Christ.

III. Testing the Claims on Rational Grounds

Having considered the claims of Mrs. Eddy from a moral point of view, it is in order now to subject them to rational tests. In this connection the first inquiry naturally concerns the sort of justification which she is able to offer for her sweeping negation of the material universe, of the human body, of disease and sin, and even of finite personality. Some hint has already been given of the way in which she sweeps these by the board. But it will not be amiss to take note of some additional speci-

mens of her peculiar propositions. Anyone who has read her writings knows how they teem with such sentences as the following:

"Matter disappears under the microscope of spirit."[1] "Divine metaphysics explains away matter."[2] "Matter and its belief—sin, sickness, and death—are states of mortal mind. . . . They are not facts of mind. They are not ideas, but illusions."[3] "The notion of a material universe is utterly opposed to the theory of man as evolved from mind."[4] "Both the material senses and their reports are unnatural, impossible, and unreal."[5] "All sensible phenomena are merely subjective states of mortal mind."[6] "If God is Spirit and God is all, surely there can be no matter."[7]

"As mind is immortal, the phrase *mortal mind* implies something untrue

[1] Science and Health, p. 264. [2] Ibid., p. 113.
[3] Ibid., p. 283. [4] Ibid., p. 545 [5] Ibid., p. 551.
[6] No and Yes, p. 22. [7] Unity of Good, p. 39.

and therefore unreal; as the phrase is used in teaching Christian Science it is meant to designate something which has no real existence."[1] "In reality, there is no mortal mind, and, consequently, no transference of mortal thought and will power."[2] "Reduced to its proper denomination, matter is mortal mind, for mind is immortal, and is not matter, but Spirit."[3] "Really, there is no such thing as mortal mind, though we are compelled to use the phrase in the endeavor to express the underlying thought."[4] "We have learned that the erring or mortal thought holds in itself all sin, sickness, and death, and imparts these states to the body."[5]

"Evil is neither a primitive nor a derivative, but is suppositional; in other words, a lie that is incapable of

[1] Science and Health, p. 114.
[2] Retrospection and Introspection, p. 93.
[3] Unity of Good, p. 44. [4] Ibid., pp. 62, 63.
[5] Miscellaneous Writings, p. 3.

proof."[1] "In Christian Science the fact is made obvious that the sinner and the sin are alike simply nothingness."[2] "The sinner created neither himself nor sin, but sin created the sinner; that is, error made the man mortal, and this mortal was the image and likeness of evil, not of good."[3] "God could never impart an element of evil, and man possesses nothing which he has not derived from God. How then has man a basis for wrongdoing?"[4] "Man is incapable of sin, sickness, or death."[5] "There is no sin, for God's kingdom is everywhere and supreme."[6] "What seem to be disease, vice, and mortality are illusions of the physical senses."[7] "Man is God's reflection, needing no cultivation, but ever beautiful and complete."[8]

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[1] Miscellaneous Writings, p. 14.
[2] Retrospection and Introspection, p. 87. [3] Ibid., p. 92.
[4] Science and Health, p. 539. [5] Ibid., p. 475.
[6] No and Yes, p. 45.
[7] Rudimental Divine Science, p. 22.
[8] Science and Health, p. 527.

"Some time it will be learned that mind constructs the body, and with its own materials. Hence no breakage or dislocation can really occur."[1] "Every sort of sickness is a degree of insanity; that is, sickness is always hallucination."[2] "Material life, with all its sin, sickness, and death, is an illusion, against which Divine Science is engaged in a war of extermination."[3]

"Spirit is infinite. There is but one Spirit, because there is but one Infinite."[4] "Soul or Spirit signifies Deity and nothing else. There is no finite soul or spirit."[5] "Man is the idea of God. . . . He is above mortal frailty. . . . He coexists with God and the universe. . . . Man is and forever was God's reflection. . . . Immortal man was and is God's image or ideal, even the infinite expression of infinite mind, and coexistent and coeternal with

[1] Science and Health, p. 402. [2] Ibid., pp. 407, 408.
[3] Ibid., p. 543. [4] Ibid., p. 334. [5] Ibid., 466.

that mind."[1] "There is but one primal cause. Therefore there can be no effect from any other cause."[2] "Will-power is not science. It belongs to the senses and its use is to be condemned."[3] "Human will is an animal propensity, not a faculty of soul. Hence it cannot govern man aright."[4]

From these excerpts it is evident that the founder of so-called Christian Science negates, not only matter, sickness, sin, and death, but man also as a proper concrete personality. In making God the one Soul, the only Spirit, and the only cause, and in defining man as simply his idea or reflection, located apart from the sphere of growth, sin, evil, sickness, and death, she reduces the human individual logically to a selfless shadow. She speaks, indeed, of a will-power as in some way attached to him, but indicates that it

[1] Science and Health, pp. 200, 266, 471, 336.
[2] Ibid., p. 207. [3] Ibid., p. 144. [4] Ibid., p. 490.

is no true characteristic, since she stigmatizes it as an aberrant animal propensity. As a real agent, gifted with even the smallest fragment of personal autonomy, man is eliminated.

We are not unaware that Christian Scientists occasionally yield to the temptation to pare down, in their interpretations, the force of Mrs. Eddy's negations. Sometimes they make bold to assert that what these apparent negations mean is the innocent proposition that in the sphere of reality the spiritual and invisible is the abiding and worthful, while the tangible and visible is the transient and unsatisfying. But they should understand that in saying this they as much as confess that the teacher to whom they ascribe plenary authority could not write English without using expressions clear out of sight of her meaning. And what could be more ridiculous than to be tied to such an oracle? Then, too,

exegesis of this sort makes by far too tame an affair of the "divine metaphysics" of the founder to be at all credible. She evidently meant it to be understood that she was not teaching a mere commonplace, but something quite out of the ordinary groove. In short, her declarations, repeated over and over again, make it perfectly plain that she had embraced and was striving with full energy to inculcate an acosmistic or world-denying pantheism—a fanciful scheme of thought which was at home in India thousands of years before she set pen to paper. Her formal rejection of pantheism in no wise refutes this statement, being based on ignorance of the truth that genuine pantheism can be radically idealistic as well as materialistic.

It is incumbent upon us, therefore, to ask for Mrs. Eddy's proofs of her sweeping negations. Formally she offers almost none, and substantially

none at all. The sum of her argumentation that calls for any sort of recognition lies in two or three items. In the first place, she claims that God's omnipresence and omnipotence exclude matter, evil, and whatever else belongs in her list of forbidden things.[1] Now, as for omnipresence, manifestly, unless it is construed as space-filling bulk, it would in no wise involve the exclusion either of matter or of finite spirit. God is wherever his efficiency operates, and matter and finite spirit do not bar out his efficiency nor limit it otherwise than he wills or permits. Rather, as subsisting by the constant energizing of God, matter and spirit testify to his omnipresence. As for omnipotence, it cannot be asked to work contradictions. If God wants free beings, children, citizens, he must create something besides selfless shadows or au-

[1] Retrospection and Introspection, p. 77; Unity of Good, pp. 4, 16, 17.

tomatons. He must endow men with a measure of real autonomy; and that involves the liability of sin and a consequent requirement for discipline in the shape of sickness or even death. Nothing in this line rules out omnipotence so long as a false demand is not made upon omnipotence to work contradictions.

The second point in Mrs. Eddy's argumentation consists in the plea that the senses confessedly deceive in some matters, and that, consequently, they are to be accounted in general false witnesses. Alleging that they report the earth to be flat and stationary, she declares: "If man's *ipse dixit* as to the stellar system is correct, this is because science is true, and the evidence of the senses false."[1] Mrs. Eddy assumes here that the senses had nothing to do in gaining the evidence for the scientific induction which

[1] Miscellaneous Writings, p. 65.

corrects the hasty naïve inference that the earth is flat and stationary. The truth is that the senses had to be industriously employed in the whole process of accumulating the evidence, that it was a case in which wide, deliberate observation mended the conclusion flowing from narrow and uncritical observation. So this item in Mrs. Eddy's argumentation gives no sort of justification to her catalogue of negations.

Equally empty is her appeal to the fact that the mind can frame an imaginary object, or dream about a nonexistent object.[1] Because men can mentally figure a house or dream about a house, it does not follow that there are no real houses. Indeed, if there were no experience of real houses there would be no rational occasion to speak of the imaginary structure or dream product. It is just because

[1] Science and Health, p. 71.

there are realities which obtrude themselves as realities, not being subservient to individual fancy, and commanding recognition from every normally endowed person, that men feel justified and are justified in distinguishing objects of sense perceptions from the ghostly products of the mental reverie or the dream. Before resorting to this sort of illustration Mrs. Eddy would have done well to consider its logical bearing upon matters of most vital concern to herself. In all history there is no record of a writer who felt more pride in a mental offspring than Mrs. Eddy took in her book entitled Science and Health.[1] As we have seen, she did not hesitate to resort to a flagrant falsification of the facts in order to

[1] In calling the book Mrs. Eddy's offspring, I do not wish to ignore the fact that other hands than hers had to do with shaping the form in which it gained wide circulation. In particular, the Rev. James Henry Wiggin, who for four years served as her literary adviser, and worked over to the best of his opportunity the phraseology of the fifth, sixth, and seventh editions, helped to give the production a more tolerable literary aspect.

arrogate sole credit to herself for its underlying ideas, and she was ready to appeal to the courts to punish any trespass upon her property right in the book. But if the senses are to be utterly spurned as false witnesses, how can the public know that Mrs. Eddy ever had anything to do with such a book? Indeed, how can the public know that either Mrs. Eddy or her book ever existed? How was Mrs. Eddy herself able to gain any valid ground of confidence in the existence of the book? We submit that having gone on with her *a priori* theorizing to eliminate the world, or at least to turn it into a lying phantom, she should have reconciled herself to rating Science and Health as the baseless fabric of a dream.

We judge that the entire argumentative ground offered by Mrs. Eddy for her negations can be adequately stated in a single sentence. What it

amounts to is simply this: "I, Mary Baker G. Eddy, say thus and so, and let all the earth keep silence before me."

It requires no searching investigation of Mrs. Eddy's attempt at metaphysical construction to discover that it is involved in a tangle of nugatory and contradictory statements. The amount of agency which is imputed therein to the nonexistent is quite amazing. Mortal mind has no real existence, and yet it generates, or is the seat of, beliefs in matter, sin, sickness, and death. There is no matter, but matter reduced to its proper denomination is mortal mind, and this mortal mind imposes upon the body sin, sickness, and death. Sin is nothingness and the sinner is nothingness, yet we are told that sin created the sinner. What is this but an absurd bandying about of terms, an utterly fantastic skipping back and forth be-

tween something and nothing? It is perfectly evident that Mrs. Eddy had no competency for consistent thinking on fundamental questions. Repeatedly her attempts in that domain placed her on record as either directly or indirectly canceling her own propositions.

An illustration is afforded on so capital a theme as the personality of God. Here the recipient of the "final revelation of the absolute Principle of scientific being and healing" runs into open contradiction with herself. In the treatise entitled No and Yes she wrote: "God is Love; and Love is Principle, not person. . . . Limitless personality is inconceivable. . . . Of God as person, human reason, imagination, and revelation give us no knowledge."[1] In the first edition of Science and Health we read: "Doctrines and opinions based on a personal God are noth-

[1] Pp. 28, 29.

ing more nor less than beliefs of intelligent matter, that we must yield or spill the inspiration and wine of Truth. . . . The Scriptures inform us that God is Love, Truth, and Life, and these certainly imply that he is Principle, not person. . . . Our beliefs of a personal Deity place infinite Life and Love within the stature of a man, make man God, or put God into matter, which is atheism."[1] Equivalent statements are contained in the third edition.[2] On the other hand, in the later editions the declaration was inserted: "If the term 'personality,' as applied to God, means infinite personality, then God *is* infinite *person*."[3] Furthermore, God is defined as the "only Ego"[4]—a definition which ought to be regarded as distinctly assertive of personality, since the term *ego* in any warrantable use can mean nothing less. Thus the

[1] Edition of 1875, pp. 17–20.
[2] Third edition revised, pp. 22, 24, 57.
[3] Edition of 1902, p. 116. [4] Ibid., p. 588.

prophetess comes round to assert what she had excluded and even declared to be inconceivable and of atheistic tendency.

In dealing with the allness of God Mrs. Eddy is no more successful in avoiding collision with herself than on the subject of divine personality. She will have it that there is nothing in existence except God and the ideas in which he is reflected or expressed. At the same time she is compelled to take account of a vast sphere of error or illusion. Her very negations compel her to magnify this and to represent that it incloses about the whole life of men. Now, whence comes this mighty sphere, this well-nigh measureless totality of illusion? It could not possibly have come from God, since he could not create anything so unlike himself as mortal mind or its deceptive products.[1] It could not have come

[1] Unity of Good, pp. 24, 29.

from man or the universe as derived from God, since they reflect his spiritual essence; neither could it result because of their falling away from God, since they are incapable of lapse and are eternally perfect;[1] furthermore, the fact that God is sole cause and sole Creator[2] would debar them from the power to originate on their own account. Thus, on Mrs. Eddy's premises, the sphere of illusion could not have been originated. But it is here and cannot be disposed of by calling it a mere nothing. A mere nothing cannot play any practical role. Illusions, however, if our oracle may be trusted, play an immense role. The whole vast sphere of them is in the realm of fact. As having, according to the fundamental postulates of Christian Science, no conceivable origin, that sphere falls logically under the

[1] Unity of Good, p. 13.
[2] Science and Health, pp. 207, 514.

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category of the unoriginated or eternal. So a rival is set over against the good Creator, and the attempt to overpress the allness of God results logically in an equivalent of Persian dualism.

A further instance of failure to make things match—and a specially curious one—appears in Mrs. Eddy's definition of man. On one page she makes him "an immortal mode of the divine mind"—a form of words correspondent to her usual description of man as an "idea of God." But on another page of the same treatise she writes, "Man is a celestial body."[1] The inference seems to be unavoidable that bodies are included among the modes or ideas of the divine mind. Accordingly, space dimensions apply to the contents of that mind, and ideas are conceivably subjects for measurement in feet and inches. In line with this exhibition of philosophical acumen is that afforded

[1] No and Yes, pp. 34, 36.

by the proposition cited in the early part of this essay: "Christian Science is the infinite calculus, defining the line, plane, space, and fourth dimension of Spirit."[1] If this strange heap of words means anything, it carries the conclusion that its fabricator attached to spirit the properties appropriate to the material being which she professed to contemn.

Space cannot well be refused to one more illustration of Mrs. Eddy's unique faculty for self-contradiction. As appears in a sentence cited above, she lays down this proposition: "In reality there in no mortal mind, and, consequently, no transference of mortal thought and will power."[2] By denying the transference of mortal thought and will power she did not mean, of course, to deal with the nonsensical assumption that the *faculties* of think-

[1] Miscellaneous Writings, p. 22.
[2] Retrospection and Introspection, p. 93.

ing and willing can be taken out of one person and literally conveyed into the possession of another person. There could be no occasion to object to what the wildest imagination never fancied. The given statement must have been designed to affirm that thought and will power in one individual cannot act as a determining force over thought and will power in another individual. With this necessary interpretation in mind, we are led to ask, What, then, did Mrs. Eddy mean by mental malpractice? Why did she describe it as a perversion of mental power for the purpose of tyranny, a form of baleful influence which could be applied by the practitioner to a distant victim, and be utilized to make the victim believe a lie, to suffer tortures, and to perform acts quite contrary to his habitual disposition?[1] The plain fact is, her

[1] Science and Health, third edition, chap. vi.

whole diatribe against mental malpractice, otherwise called malicious mesmerism, or malicious animal magnetism, assumes a facile ability in one person to control thought and volition in another, and to control them by means of "mortal mind," which indeed is formally characterized by her as the source of sickness, sin, and death; in other words, of all that is counted evil or afflictive. When, therefore, she denies to mortal mind all ability to transfer thought or willpower, she denies what is inwrought with her theory of mental malpractice.

With the theoretical contradiction a practical was conjoined. While Mrs. Eddy, in her formal maxims, very worthily accentuated the obligation always to give a benevolent direction to thought as opposed to a malicious, she was far from consistently exemplifying these good maxims. On the contrary, as has been shown, she wrote diatribes

against specific individuals in which a perfect fury of ill will and virtual malediction came to expression. Moreover, she had a group of her students practice adversely against these hated persons. So have explicitly affirmed some of those who had part in these transactions.[1] One of them, a resident in the metaphysical college with Mrs. Eddy and her family for nearly a year, has rendered this testimony: "Mrs. Eddy was constantly having attacks of illness. We were often called up about eleven o'clock at night to treat her, and were obliged to remain up until about two o'clock in the morning. These attacks, we were told, were brought on by the 'enemy,' working through us, as her students. She claimed that the only way the 'enemy' could reach her was through her students, she being so strong and so pure that their malicious

[1] Milmine, pp. 231, 239, 240; Peabody, pp. 175–194.

animal magnetism could not reach her in any other way. So we used to go into the parlor, after breakfast and supper, each day and mentally 'take up the enemy.' . . . I was told to treat the enemy' (Kennedy, Arnes, Choate, and Childs) to cause their 'old beliefs' to return, and prostrate them at once. 'Old beliefs' meant former diseases from which they had been healed, in some cases even tumors and cancers."[1] Other concrete evidences could be adduced. So it stands in the historical record that the founder of Christian Science flagrantly contradicted in practice the better side of her own teaching relative to mental malpractice.

A brief reference to Mrs. Eddy's interpretation of the Scriptures will not be irrelevant to an estimate of the intellectual aspect of her system. In the Key to the Scriptures (incorporated with Science and Health) she com-

[1] Cited by Peabody, pp. 180, 181.

ments on portions of Genesis and of the book of Revelation; that is, she pretends to comment upon them. In reality, she merely uses the scriptural texts as pegs upon which to hang her stock phrases. Her exegetical notes might just as well have been attached to almost any other writings—say, to passages of the Gilgamesch epic written in old Babylon or to chapters of the Upanishads composed in ancient India. Indeed, a much more congenial subject-matter could have been furnished by the latter than that lodged in the biblical books, a subject-matter very close to Mrs. Eddy's pantheistic postulates, whereas she can read those postulates into the biblical texts only by sheer violence. Her exegetical method is soberly characterized as interpretation by fiat. A specimen is furnished by her rendering of the word *beginning* in the first line of Genesis. This word, she says, signi-

fies "*the only*—that is, the eternal verity and unity of God and man." It means that, not because any Hebraist in the world would so declare, but simply because the founder of Christian Science wants it to mean that. Other interpretations have a like basis. By an intemperate scheme of allegorizing, text after text is made to repeat one or another of the Eddyite aphorisms. To one who has any real knowledge of biblical science the whole concoction can appear as nothing better than a heap of vagaries. Nor will his appreciation be helped by running across sentences which, taken as they stand, contain no intelligible proposition. Let a couple of examples suffice: "Understanding," Mrs. Eddy says, "is the line of demarcation between the real and the unreal."[1] Now, understanding may be a power qualified to discern a line of demarcation, but

[1] Science and Health, p. 505.]

what mind that is capable of clear thinking would care to identify it with a line? Again, our exegete remarks, "God gathers unformed thoughts into their proper channels, and unfolds these thoughts."[1] How unformed thoughts can be gathered into channels is very much of a puzzle, since thoughts exist only in being formed by a mental agent, and as they exist are already where they belong, and are not a kind of baggage needing transportation. Of sentences like these in Mrs. Eddy's writings there is no dearth. Their name is legion.

In relation to the Christian Science scheme of healing, the founder has given ample illustration of her fertile gift for self-contradiction. She has refuted in her own person the extravagant claims put forth for that scheme.

[1] Science and Health, p. 506.

The testimony cited above from one of her students affords proof, and much more is available. Up to the time of her relative seclusion—whatever may have been the case after that date—she was subject to nervous crises, at times so acute as to result in suspended consciousness.[1] Nor was her mental condition any more normal. Christian Science was far from securing to her constant interior serenity. Close up to the end of her career there were recurring intervals in which her mind was fairly ridden by the witchcraft delusion. No person of equal prominence in recent times has shown anything like the same degree of this baleful obsession.

The inability of Christian Science to make good its claim was thus clearly demonstrated in the person of its founder. Moreover, she was compelled in a wider range practically to

[1] Milmine, pp. 21, 159, 301, 302.

admit the powerlessness of the Christian Science method to fulfill its vaunted office in healing all manner of bodily ills. The incompetency of her practitioners to wrestle successfully with breaks and dislocations compelled her to admit the propriety of passing over such matters to the regular surgeon.[1] The peril involved to communities in the attempts of her healers to treat contagious diseases as simply false beliefs forced her, as means of protection against the rising wrath of an outraged people, to advise the said healers not to deal with such cases, and to obey the law in reporting them.[2] Once more, the pertinacity of disease, as frequently manifested in resisting the healing art of Christian Science, led her to grant permission to her practitioners to call in an M. D. to diagnose obstinate

[1] Science and Health, 1886, p. 328.
[2] Christian Science Journal, March, 1901; December, 1902.

cases.[1] Now, such a list of concessions amounts practically to a breakdown of the exclusive claims of Christian Science, and licenses the public to rate its therapeutic value at a very moderate figure. Mrs. Eddy, in her easy-going, sophistical, and lordly fashion, may throw the blame of these failures of her scheme on the existing condition of the world. But what we want of medical science is ability to deal with the actual world. A scheme which cannot do this, and yet boasts of sole legitimacy, advertises itself as a humbug.

In view of the threefold slump from her high-sounding premises, on the part of Mrs. Eddy, Christian Scientists cannot be regarded as earning serious rebuke when, as often happens, they resort to regular physicians in search of relief from their ailments. With their leader going ahead at such

[1] Manual of the Mother Church, 1906, Article X, Section 3.

a pace in the role of inconsistency, why should it be thought that they are under obligation to pay respect to the claims of consistency?

What is to be said about the numerous cures claimed for Christian Science? In the first place, it is to be said with all emphasis that no reliable conclusion can be drawn by merely giving attention to the apparently successful attempts at cure. Every quack who has ever gained considerable notoriety has been able to make a brilliant showing by parading his successes and leaving out of sight the vast catalogue of his failures. That Christian Science should be able to exhibit a specially ample list of cures is no proper occasion for either surprise or admiration, since Mrs. Eddy, instead of occupying herself with practicing her method, devoted herself to the manufacturing of practitioners. As her course occupied only two or three weeks, it naturally

appealed to those who wished to be equipped for earning a livelihood in short order. Thus a considerable corps of healers was set to work, all of them interested in glorifying their calling. Naturally, reports of cures mounted to a high figure, and even included some instances of horses and dogs receiving mental treatment very much to their advantage. But what about the cases in which the Christian Science method proved to be a failure? What about the cases in which it was shown up as nothing better than homicidal foolishness? No advertising agency has been in operation to keep such cases in view. No induction, however, which leaves them out of consideration can claim respect, and they make a tremendous offset.

Furthermore, in any true estimate, instances of temporary relief must be distinguished from true and permanent cures. The stimulus of a specially

potent form of suggestion will often cause an inward elation which is able to offset the power of disease or infirmity for the time being. But the sphere of the efficacious working of such an agency is intrinsically limited, so that the permanency of the apparent benefit is made problematical. As a matter of fact, many Christian Science cures have been transient. A typical case is that of the British earl who was reported by competent medical advice to be suffering from fatty degeneration of the heart. He believed that he was cured by Christian Science and wrote about the marvel in the Cosmopolitan. In ninety days, however, fatty degeneration of the heart took him out of the land of the living.[1] Instances of this order, we contend, must enter into the basis of any true estimate, and the so-called science which ignores them is simply a pseudo-science.

[1] C. R. Brown, Faith and Health, p. 95.

That now and then one whom an adept in medical science has pronounced to be suffering from a serious ailment should seem to be permanently cured under Christian Science treatment affords obviously no sure proof that this treatment is ever adequate for organic disease, since medical science does not claim that the diagnosis even of the skilled physician is invariably correct. It is quite possible that in individual instances it should result in a too unfavorable judgment of the patient's condition.

By granting that, within a certain range, actual cures may be wrought through the agency of Christian Science practitioners, we make no real approach to conceding the truth of Mrs. Eddy's system. These cures no more prove the validity of her religio-medical dogmatics than the similar cures wrought at mediæval shrines prove the presence of a supernatural

virtue in the relics of the saints. So far as an efficacious ground is concerned, the cures of the practitioners belong in a common class with those still wrought at Lourdes or at the sanctuary of Saint Anne de Beaupré. In all these instances we have illustration of what the psychological factor can accomplish; that is, of what can be done by agencies and conditions which are specially stimulating to the hope, expectation, and faith of the patient. That in dealing with certain forms of functional as opposed to organic ailments this factor can be operated with good effect is commonly recognized by medical science, and had begun to be recognized before Mrs. Eddy appeared upon the scene. The founder of Christian Science made no real discovery. She simply (following Quimby) laid hold of a truth which, in this age of industrious psychological and physical re-

search, was bound to come to its own, and surrounded it with a mass of fantastic, exaggerated, and mutually contradictory assertions. To take her shallow and pretentious scheme, and make it a substitute for genuine medical science, with its demonstrated efficacy to ameliorate suffering, to master various forms of disease, and to arrest contagion, is little less than a sacrilege against sane intelligence.

One more consideration enters into a fair estimate of the healing art of Christian Science. Not only is its power for good limited; there is in it a certain intrinsic tendency to mischief. It directs its votaries to create for themselves a fool's paradise, from which all sickness, sin, pain, and death are barred out by mental fiat. Now, it may be possible in many individual instances to follow out this prescription temporarily. A man may think

away all that is afflictive and experience a kind of exaltation above all mortal ills for a time. But realities are stubborn things. To mentally repeat the equation, "Accident, sickness, sin, disease, pain, and death are equal to zero," does not make them equal to zero. They are here and have to be reckoned with. They come right up to the door of the fictitious paradise in which a man thinks to intrench himself, and no lock or bolt will keep them out. To negate them as baseless phantoms, to keep on negating them year in and year out, must involve a decided strain, and a strain that in the more delicately organized is likely to be perilous to mental balance. It is enough to make the head swim to be under requisition to deny persistently the existence of the most obtrusive realities, to keep on turning the world into a ghost world, a concatenation of empty illusions. Through this feature

Christian Science teaching and practice are intrinsically fitted to aggravate liabilities to insanity. The period of trial has been too short to give adequate illustration of the given tendency, but it is logically in the phase of the system upon which we have been commenting; and it finds means of nourishment in another phase.

As has been noticed, the mind of the founder was fairly obsessed with the notion of the power of mind over mind in an adverse sense. Personal idiosyncrasy may have had something to do with the obsession. But there is a certain basis for this sort of experience in Christian Science postulates. If a benevolent direction of thought by the healer has such unlimited efficacy to work benefit, why may not a malevolent direction of thought have a corresponding power to work mischief? Herein a ground of apprehension and uneasiness is pro-

vided. This may be counteracted in considerable part by the action of the common sense of the general community; but this wholesome outside restraint is not certain to be altogether effectual. A liability remains that something of that acute suspicion and horror which afflicted their founder should invade the ranks of Christian Scientists. However, we will not press this point, and content ourselves with urging that an ultra attempt to frame a fictitious paradise, persistently carried on, involves a certain hazard to the mental balance of the more delicately organized.

It may be granted that a measure of quietistic teaching, or emphasis on the repose of faith, is adapted to the condition in which people are often found. It serves a good purpose to tell those who have been wrestling with their burdens and difficulties that something besides wrestling is in

order; that it is their high privilege to cast their cares upon Him who careth for them, and to rest in the infinite goodness and love. In this line of procedure the ills of life, if not eliminated outright, will be made to lose much of their bitterness, and a serenity of soul will be gained which no self-assertive striving could procure. But who needs to go to Christian Science for a salutary quietism of this sort? It is a commonplace of ordinary Christianity, a remedy for overanxiety which the gospel has ever been offering to the burdened and the troubled. The enjoyment of its benefit is in no wise dependent on saddling oneself with Mrs. Eddy's arbitrary and fantastic dogmas.

A word will not be out of place on the merits of Mrs. Eddy's system in relation to young subjects. Medical authority has often remarked on the signal unfitness of the methods of

Christian Science to meet the physical needs of infants. What about the adaptation of its peculiar tenets to the moral needs of children and youth? Take such maxims as the following: "Man is incapable of sin"; "God would never impart an element of evil, and man possesses nothing which he has not derived from God"; "There is no sin, for God's kingdom is everywhere and supreme." Will it tend to put good fiber into the consciences of the young to be familiarized with such propositions? Christian Scientists in general have come out of communions which repeat the biblical emphasis on the reality, turpitude, and genuine demerit of sin; and the benefit of their antecedent training has been carried with them. How will it be with a generation that from the start is taught to regard sin as nothing more than one of the illusions of the mortal mind which itself is declared to be in

reality nonexistent? Will there not be a liability that the theoretical antinomianism will result in practical antinomianism or indifference to moral distinctions? Plainly, if a different outcome is provided for, it will be on the score of expedients quite other than the instilling of the tenets of "divine metaphysics" as taught by Mrs. Eddy.

We conclude that the claims of Christian Science, as a healing art, ought to be cut down to a modest residuum, while the high pretensions of Mrs. Eddy as the founder of a final religio-medical system are utterly baseless. It does not follow, however, that we think of Christian Science as destitute of all competency to maintain and advance itself. The money interest of the movement, so conspicuous from the start, may be expected to work as an efficient spur to propagandism, so long as anything like a compact

organization is maintained. And new recruits will not fail to come forward, so long as there are people whose slender logic permits them to suppose that healing expedients, which the author of Science and Health was at length compelled practically to admit to be of limited efficacy, and which are essentially paralleled in numerous historic connections, can prove that Christian Science as taught by the founder is a divinely inspired and authoritative system.

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